THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) As per the information furnished by the State Government of Maharashtra the number of children who have died in the last three years in the Melghat region of Amravati district in Maharashtra is as follows:—

Year	No. of deaths
1994	1119
1995	1099
1996	1451

Upto July, 1997 a total of 323 children have in this region and none of the children died due to want of food.

The Public Distribution System is joint responsibility of the Central Government and the State Governments. While the Central Government procures and makes available foodgrains in bulk to the States the responsibility of distribution to the consumers rests with the State Government. The State Government of Maharashtra have reported that regular and adequate supplies of foodgrains are being maintained in Melghat area. Considering the special needs of the area the State Government have fixed higher scale of distribution, opened Fair Price Shops (FPS) in 21 villages, provided 24 temporary godowns with foodgrains in the villages which have no access during rainy season, supplied foodgrains on credit to the Fair Price Shops and deployed 10 vehicles for delivery of foodgrains to the doorstep of FPSs. FCI has made available adequate quantities of foodgrains continuously in their depots in Amravati and Wardha.

Guidelines laid for private sector

*268. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY :

DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD :

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the guideline laid down by Government in regard to power tariff for private power sector;

(b) whether the power generated in private sector in the country is costlier than that of the power generated in Public sector; and

(c) if so, the details and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) The tariff for sale of electricity by generating companies, both in public and private sector, is to be fixed in accordance with the tariff notification issued by Government of India dated 30-3-1992 (as amended from time to time).

(b) and (c). The tariff of a power station is dependent upon its completed cost: technology, funding pattern, interest rate, type, price and source of fuel; taxes and duties of fuel and equipment; year of completion; electricity pricing laws and regulation etc. These factors render comparability of the tariffs of different plants difficult.

Mega Power Projects in Gujarat

*269. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government of Gujarat has planned to set up a Mega Power Project based on L.N.G.;

(b) the details of comparison of capital cost with different fuels and the selling price of electricity per unit;

(c) what quantum of power will be generated by this project and by when; and

(d) how much power will be utilised by the state for its own purposes and what percentage will be supplied to other states.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) No. Sir.

(b) It is difficult to compare capital cost and selling price of electricity per unit of power projects with different fuels as they depend upon the location, technology, capital structure, gestation period, type of fuel among the other factors.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Steps to check falling profits of SAIL

*270. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the strategy finalised by SAIL for cost cutting and reduced consumption of coal etc. to check the falling profits; and

(b) the other incentive schemes devised in consultation with the trade unions to ensure better performance of the SAIL?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) The strategy adopted by SAIL for cost cutting mainly includes stricter control and closer monitoring of financial expenditure and materials consumption; greater utilisation of available manpower and other in-house facilities; emphasis on preventive maintenance with stricter adherence to standard operating practices and reduction in administrative over-heads etc.

As a part of controlling consumption of materials, SAIL has taken measures to reduce the specific consumption of Coking Coal which includes ensuring supply of the right quality and quantity of indigenous coal by associating independent third party analysts and escorting of coal rakes; adopting coal saving practices like charging smaller coke fractions in the Blast Furnaces, higher usage of Sinter in the Blast Furnace burden, modernisation of Blast Furnaces etc.

Besides, SAIL is taking steps on a continuous basis to improve its performance, which include modernisation and technological upgradation of its plants, improving techno-economic factors i.e. reduction in coke rate, energy consumption, metallic input, improvement in yield, captive power generation, extensive customer contact, market oriented product-mix, improvement in quality, long term relationship with customers, leadership in service and customer satisfaction, strict control and monitoring of operating costs, higher productivity and greater autonomy to field officers, etc.

The incentive schemes which have been primary production based are being reoriented, in consultation with the Trade Unions, to make them focus more on current priority areas of cost reduction and quality improvement.

Sick and closed industrial units in the country

*271. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of sick and closed industrial units in the country as per the latest estimates;

(b) the aggregate book value as well as the current market value of capital assets locked up in these units; and